The Use of Claim Resources by Undergraduate Students in High- and Low-Graded Persuasive Essays

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Abstract

This paper compares high-graded essays to low-graded essays in terms of various 'Claims' resources used by undergraduate students. The theoretical basis of the Claim is mainly derived from the ENGAGEMENT system of the appraisal theory within a Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) framework. The ENGAGEMENT system is concerned with how writers engage with readers through internal voices of Averral and external voices of 'Attribution'. Data was collected from 12 persuasive essays written by both international and local Australian students enrolled in an EAP course running at a regional university in Australia. The text analyses reveal significant differences between high-graded essays and low-graded essays in using Claim resources. While successful writers can produce essays that display a balanced incorporation of strategies of internal Averral into their presentation of external Attribution within particular schematic stages, poor writers fail to display the pattern. Pedagogical implications will be discussed in terms of academic literacy and integrity.

Introduction

Writing a persuasive essay (PE)[1] coherently along with critical analysis is an area where academic staff have voiced their deep concerns discussing academic arguments particularly written by English as a Second Language (ESL) students at an undergraduate level (e.g. Xu, 2001; Wu, 2005, 2008). Academic staff use such terms as 'lack of links/connections, logical flow', a less smooth/unnatural/flow of information, unclear topic sentences and deviations from the topic'. These resources have been traditionally dealt with within English for Academic Purposes (EAP) courses, under the name of conjunctions using such lexico-grammatical terms as cause and effect, contrast/comparison, discourse marker, concession, condition, purpose and negation. The resources involve writers' justifying or legitimating their claims in their essays in order to 'engage' with the audience. The resources assist writers to assert or 'aver' their opinions on the issue under investigation in

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conjunction with 'Attribution' (Sinclair, 1988; Hunston, 2000). While averral corresponds to White's (2004) terms of writers' internal voices, Attribution corresponds to the external voices that help to build the credibility of their averrals or claims made earlier.

While many studies in the second language writing literature have examined 'Attribution' focusing on referencing along with plagiarism issues and Modality in Pragmatics (e.g. Hirvela & Belcher, 2001; Bazerman, 2004; see also Lee, 2010a), relatively scant attention has been paid to the Averral side of the 'Claim' although most ESL students are struggling to use the above mentioned resources effectively. An extensive body of work in EAP and Pragmatics has also explored some elements of the interpersonal resources under such terms as metadiscourse (e.g. Hyland, 2004, 2005; Crismore,1989), emphatic devices (e.g. Milton & Hyland, 1999), certainty markers (e.g. McEnery & Kifle, 2002) cause and effect (Allen, 2005), and evaluation (e.g. Hunston & Thompson, 2000). Nevertheless, previous research on tackling these aspects of writing has been fragmentally conducted on lexico-grammatical levels of the issues. This may be partly due to the lack of methodological rigour required to situate the issues within an integrative and theoretically consistent framework (Lee, 2008b).

In Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), the issues with the lack of coherence and critical analyses have been well documented and investigated within 'textual metafunction', in particular (e.g. Xu, 2001) in relation to cohesion and coherence (see details Martin, 1992; Halliday, 1994; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014; Eggins, 2000). In this paper, the issues will be dealt with from a different perspective, namely, a discourse semantic perspective within an interpersonal meaning. Specifically, it will be investigated as a phenomenon of evaluation within the ENGAGEMENT system of 'appraisal' theory developed from interpersonal metafuction (see details of appraisal theory in Macken-Horarik & Martin, 2003; Martin, 1997, 2000; Martin & Rose, 2003, 2007; Martin & White, 2005, 2007; White, 1998, 2004).

ENGAGEMENT refers to a set of resources by which writers adjust and negotiate the arguability of their utterances (White, 1998; 2004). From an ENGAGEMENT perspective, writers can make two sets of choices simultaneously: proposition (information values) vs. proposal (interactional values) and Monogloss (one voice) vs. Heterogloss (multiple voices) (White,2004, p.9). Monogloss demotes or ignores heteroglossic diversity as a 'bare assertion' (e.g. 'Universities in Australia are based on Western intellectual tradition'-Proposition (hereafter 'P')). In contrast, Heterogloss promotes the possibility of diverse voices (e.g. according to Shen (2007), 'P'; It seems that 'P') (Körner, 2001; White, 1998, 2004). Heteroglossic ENGAGEMENT further involves the introduction and management of writers' internal voices ('Intra-vocalisation' or 'Internalisation') and external voices to which values are attributed ('Extra-vocalisation' or 'Externalisation') (White,1998, 2004, p.14) (see Figure 1 below).

Following the lead of British scholars involved in studies of evaluation (e.g. Hunston, 2000) including White himself (2002), the distinction between 'Averral' and 'Attribution' has been adopted in preference to the Intra-vocalisation and Extra-vocalisation (Lee, 2006, 2010a). Averral is thus generated from writers' internalised voices which consist of Claim and Modality or Entertain[3] (Martin & White, 2005, 2007) (see Figure 1). Among the two Averrals, this paper is concerned with 'Claim' resources. The term 'Claim' is borrowed from Myers (1989). Intrigued by Wu's (2003) definition of claim, in this paper a claim refers to a conclusive averral that writers are seeking to establish by utilizing a set of Proclaim and Disclaim resources(see ensuing sections 3 and 4 for details).Of particular interest in this paper is an examination of the patterns in which writers deploy dialogic interplay' between Attribution and Averral as well as between Proclaim (e.g. Reason and Result) and Disclaim (e.g. Denial) along the schematic structure of argument.

Previous Work on Claim Resources Within Appraisal

In SFL, while there has been considerable research on the study of appraisal in academic writing (e.g. Hood,2004, 2010; Lee, 2006; Derewianka, 2007), most studies in these areas have been carried out in the EFL context of the 'Intercultural Rhetoric'[2] field targeting Chinese writers (e.g. Hood, 2004; Wu, 2008; Liu & McCabe, 2018; Xiang & Xiao, 2009; Meng & Li, 2010). Among those, several of the studies have focused on ENGAGEMENT (e.g. Liu & McCabe, 2018; Xiang & Xiao, 2009; Meng & Li, 2010; Geng, 2012) by comparing writing by Chinese to that of the native English speaking students. The researchers claim that while the difference in the patterns of use of Claims resources by the two groups is not statistically significant (Geng, 2012), English writers tend to use more ENGAGEMENT resources overall. Specifically, while Xiang & Xiao (2009) found that Chinese students use more 'Proclaim', Meng & Li (2010) argue that English writers used more Entertain and Deny items in their writing. There seems to be only one study about ENGAGEMENT in a Korean EFL context. Kim (2011) compared argumentative essays of L1 British professional writers to those of L2 Korean university students in argumentative essays. The corpus based result revealed that Korean L2 writers used ENGAGEMENT resources significantly less frequently for creating dialogic spaces for the readers' alternative opinions.

Some research has been conducted on the comparison between high- graded and low- graded essays by undergraduates. Swain's (2010) analysis of ENGAGEMENT by L2 writers revealed that highly scored writers utilised a wider range of the resources than lowly scored groups. Wu (2003, 2005, 2008) investigated the use of resources in 27 first year Singaporean ESL undergraduates' argumentative writing in Geography. The goal of her study was to draw comparisons between high-graded essays (HGEs) and low- graded essays (LGEs) in an argumentative essay. While not many differences were identified between the low and high–graded essays

in terms of the overall use of appraisal resources, the study shows that low- and high-rated scripts differed in the use of contractive options.

The intention of this study is to complement the existing vast body of work on coherence and critical stances by taking into consideration the dynamic interplay of the Claim resources within the ENGAGEMENT system (see details in sections below). Specifically, this paper compares HGEs to LGEs written by undergraduate students at an Australian university in argumentative essay in terms of their deployments of 'Claims' resources.

Based on the stated aims and informed by relevant literature, the following three questions were posed:

1. What are the differences between HGEs and LGEs in their deployment of Claim resources?

2. What are the differences between HGEs and LGEs in terms of the interplay between Averral expressed through Claim and Attribution expressed through intertextual relations of referencing?

3. What are the differences between HGEs and LGEs in their construction of arguability and persuasion through several resources for realising Claim in different stages of schematic structure?

Theoretical Framework for Claim Resources

'Open' vs. 'Close' options

Within the heteroglossic options of choosing double voices, internal or external voices can operate along with interrelated parameters, such as from contracting to expanding, or from open to close (see Figure 1). The Heteroglossic Open parameter relates to whether a writer engages with a reader by acknowledging heteroglossic diversity, while the Heteroglossic Close parameter rejects or suppresses any alternative views the reader might hold. In other words, the opening up of options extends the possibilities for negotiation, allowing the reader to take an alternative position. In contrast, the close value acknowledges explicitly or implicitly possible alternative positions in relation to utterances but it seeks to limit the range or possibility of interaction with diverse factors. If a writer chooses the open options, then s/he is expanding solidarity with a reader. If the writer opts for the close options, then the writer is deliberately contracting such solidarity. Typologically (between A and B), while Entertainment and Attribution enable writers to open up their potential for interacting with the heteroglossic diversity, Disclaim and Proclaim resources help to close down the degree of heteroglossic diversity (White, 1998, 2004). However, topologically (from A to B), some Claim resources operate both open (e.g. 'I would say' that learning from Chinese intellectual tradition is helpful).and close system (e.g. 'It is needless to say' that learning from Chinese intellectual tradition is helpful).
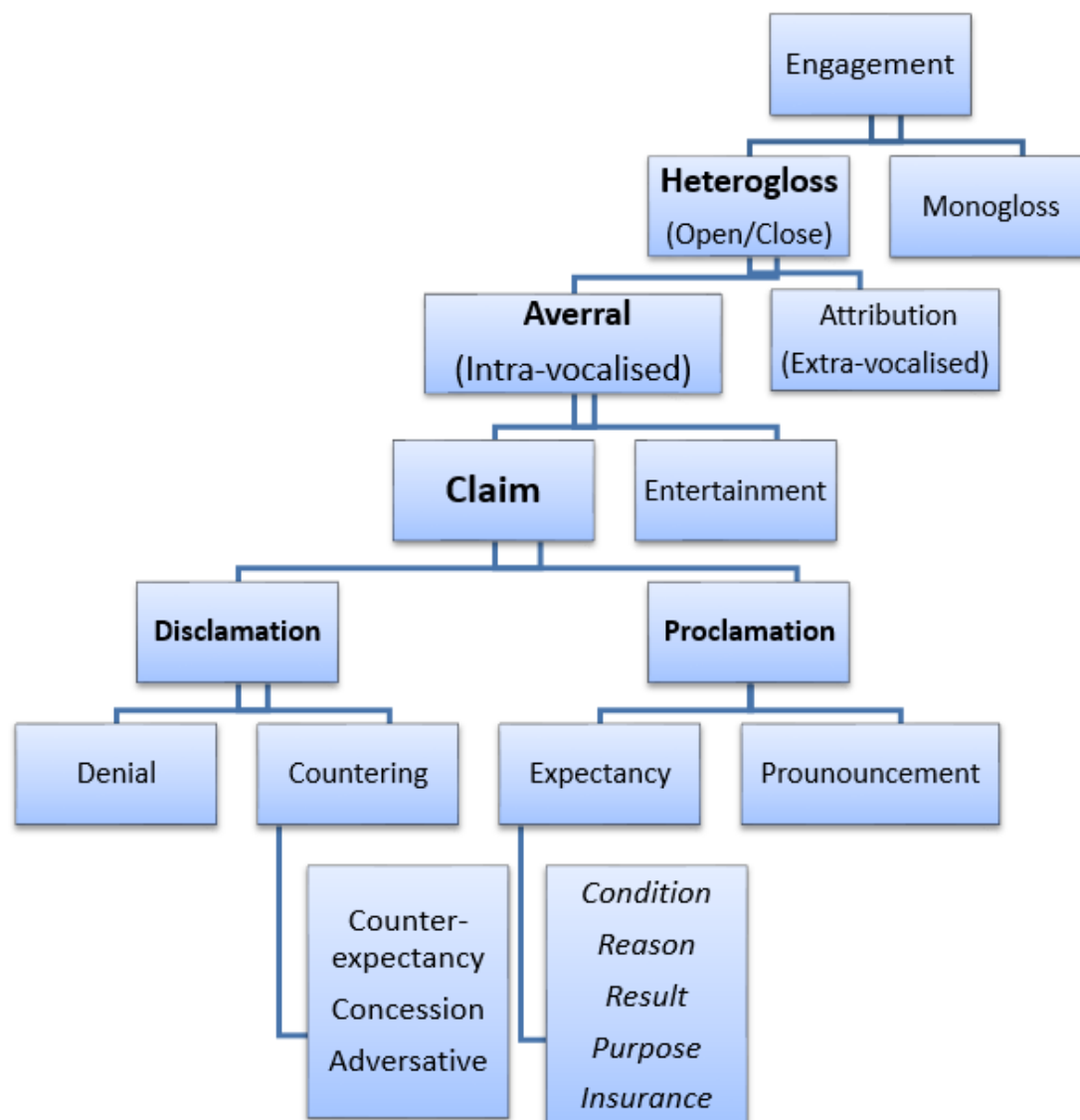
Figure1: Claim resources within ENGAGEMENT system (Modified from White,1998, 2004)

Categories of Claim

According to White (2004), Claim resources are divided into two broad options: Disclaim and Proclaim (see Figure 1). Under Disclaim, some alternative or divergent proposition is invoked and then rejected. Under Proclaim, writers act to narrow the range of the heteroglossic diversity by increasing their interpersonal cost in one utterance over its possible alternatives. Disclaim is subdivided into Denial and Countering. Denial acts to close down heteroglossic options because under negation, an opposite proposition is cited but rejected directly (e.g. not, no, rather than, fail, without, refuse, etc.). However, it is still heteroglossic because it places a writer's voice in relation to potential opposing voices as two voices are implicated (White, 1999). Countering values act to invoke some alternative or opposing positions, but then to replace, counter or frustrate the alternative positions. White includes typical

counter-expectancy as comment adjuncts (e.g. amazingly, incredibly, surprisingly, unpredictably, miraculously, suddenly, unexpectedly, etc.) as well as related epithets such as surprise/surprising (e.g. the 'surprise' victory). Concessive conjunction is included here (e.g. 'although', 'even though', 'however', 'while', 'though', 'even if', 'but', 'nevertheless', 'in spite of', 'despite'). Alongside these concessions, continuatives of mood adjuncts are also included within adjusting expectations (e.g. already, finally, still, only, just, merely, even, etc.).

Proclaim is sub-categorised into Expectancy and Pronouncement. Under Expectancy, writing is characterised as heteroglossically uncontentious, because it is a given fact within the heteroglossic community in that everyone knows or believes this. Therefore, the proposition is entirely expected. Adding clauses such as, 'of course', 'no wonder', 'needless to say', 'naturally', 'in any case', 'predictably', to a statement are typical examples of Expectation. The textual voice explicitly conveys its investment in the viewpoint being advanced and thereby confronts or rules out possible alternatives. The interpersonal cost of any challenge to the clause is thereby increased since the writer claims to write not only on her/his own behalf but also with the support of communal belief and common expectation. White (1998, 2004) also includes the Close system network in this category such as causal-conditional (e.g. because, due to, therefore, so, then, consequently, etc.).

A writer may use Pronouncement to explicitly indicate her/his commitment to the utterance by interpolating him/herself directly into the writing as an explicitly responsible source of the utterance. Examples include: 'I'd say' that he saw this (P), 'it's my contention' that P, an intensifying comment adjunct, such as 'really' P, using the emphatic form (e.g. he did see this), or through structures such as (It is a matter of fact that …P).

Revised Framework of Claim

The basic framework of the Claim in this paper is derived from White's (1998, 2004) theoretical accounts of the internalised voices of ENGAGEMENT. However, this paper remodelled the framework a great deal to suit an academic writing context (see Figure 1). Claim consists of Disclamation (Denial and Countering) and Proclamation (Expectancy and Pronouncement). Due to the limit of space, coding examples are provided for extended items only.

Disclamation

Disclamation is divided into Denial and Countering. In this study, Countering is subdivided into three resources: 'Counter-expectancy' (e.g. but, however, and yet, contrary to this, in contrast), 'Concession' (e.g. even though, although, despite, nevertheless, in spite of), and 'Adversative' (e.g. only, just, still, already, finally, even, merely) in order to frustrate expectations that are set up in the previous section.

Proclamation

The first category of Proclamation is Expectancy. This study eliminates typical examples of Expectancy termed 'Concur' by White (2004, p. 5) (e.g. no wonder, of course), as these explicit types of the Concur are not manifested in the data. In this study, most reworking of White's model has been done on the Expectancy resources. This study proposes that Expectancy covers five resources: Condition, Reason, Result, Purpose, and Insurance (see Figure 1). White uses the term 'Condition' to indicate the 'Expectancy' categories in his coding, but he does not differentiate them as to delicacy. Nevertheless, it can be inferred from his database that White (1999) extends the two main Expectancy categories beyond the typical meaning of the Concur (e.g. of course, unpredictable).

Condition

The first category deals with a virtual meaning of the 'if condition' (e.g. if, on the ground that, as long as, as long as, unless etc.). Example 1 shows that Condition 'if' sets up expectation within the proposal. While II represents a clause, III represents clause complex (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014, p.10).

(1) III **If** [expectancy: condition] Australian Universities want to display an informed approach to the very relevant issue of land management, II they need to learn from these traditions (ABS 7-33).

Reason

The second category is 'reason': 'Reason' is realised grammatically in a variety of ways. This includes grammatical elements such as nouns (e.g. reason, cause, etc.), conjunctions (e.g. since, because, since, as, considering that, etc.), prepositions (e.g. because of, on account of, for that reason, owing to, due to, for, with, through, by, etc), and causal verbs (e.g. is caused, is generated, result from, stem from etc.). It also includes causative constructions (e.g. make, let, have, prompt, etc.), modulated verbs (e.g. allow, force, impose, enforce, etc), and potential causation, which does not have a causative form but connotes the causal meaning (e.g. help, enable, etc.) (Halliday, 1994, p.287). These all involve obligation because the agent initiates the action and makes something happen (Eggins, 2000).

(2) III Some universities in Australia have achieved international reputation II **due to** [expectancy: reason] their success in the science field through 20th century (EAS 1-2).

In this example, the cause (minor clause) is 'their success' and the way effect is achieved is evident in 'their reputations' (major clause). The effect realises an expectation set up by the cause (success in the science field). The expectation is fulfilled by achieving an international reputation.

Result

While 'Reason' is based on an 'effect^cause' relationship, 'Result' operates on the 'cause ^ effect' relation. 'Result' also consists of various grammatical resources such as conjunctions (e.g. thus, therefore, hence, but, so), verbs (e.g. lead to, result in, give rise to), and prepositions (e.g. consequently, accordingly, after all, as a result of).

(3) III **As a result of** [expectancy: result] applying this idea, II unplanned technologies that may benefit on some capitalists, II but can harm society can be brought (EAS 1-10).

Purpose

'Purpose' also involves conjunctions (e.g. in order that, so that) in the expansion around the clause as well as prepositions (e.g. for that purpose, to, in order to, to that end, so as to). As defined in interactional analysis, Purpose such as 'in order to', infinitive 'to', 'by doing', 'in doing' is also included as an 'Expectancy'.

(4) III The first reason [expectancy: reason] for the necessity to learn from other intellectual tradition is II **to** [expectancy: purpose] advance technology with an appropriate plan (EAS 1-4).

Insurance

'Insurance' includes examples such as 'ensuring', 'to ensure', 'to assure ''will', 'would', etc. Like concessions, the result also entails semantics of obligation

(5) III Implementing measures II to **ensure** [expectancy: insurance] that key points from other traditions be incorporated into the present day university syllabuses and teaching practices, II **will** [expectancy: insurance] indirectly lead to [expectancy: result] a significant increase in potential economic activity (ABS 8-1).

Pronouncement is the second resource under Proclamation. Some examples of this category include 'I would say that Sydney is beautiful', 'what I can see is that Sydney is beautiful or 'in my opinion, Sydney is beautiful'. However, such explicit subjective forms seldom occur in academic writing. In parallel with 'macro-theme' at the text level, 'hyper-theme' at the paragraph level and 'theme' at the clause level (Martin, 1992), this study proposes three types of Pronouncement: Announcement, Proclamation and Pronouncement. 'Announcement' refers to the Pronouncement that occurs at the global level, in the introductory section of the thesis statement and in the conclusion, as seen in example 7. Proclamation refers to the Pronouncement used at the paragraph level, as seen in example 6. Therefore, strictly speaking, Pronouncement refers to the 'theme' part (the first … traditions) of the sentence at the clause level (see example 6). Example 6 proclaims prospectively, while example 7 announces retrospectively.

(6) III **The first reason [reason] for the necessity to learn other intellectual traditions** [pronouncement][Theme] <u>is</u> [Rheme] II to [purpose] achieve technology with appropriate plan (EAS 1-4).

(7) **In conclusion,** [pronouncement] Australian university needs to learn not only from the Western intellectual tradition but also from those of other countries (EAS 1-44).

As seen, Pronouncement functions as initiating interaction by anchoring the relationship with a reader. Pronouncement is therefore an important metadiscoursal feature in facilitating dialogue. It is also an important rhetorical strategy to demonstrate the writer's high authority in an institutional position alongside the Expectancy resource.

Methodology

Design

Participants in this study comprised six students from East Asian regions (EAS) such as South Korea and China, and six Australian Local students (ALS). Most of them were first year university students. The site for data collection was an English for Academic Purposes class run within a regional university in Australia. Throughout the semester, the students completed four major assignments. The final assignment with 1000 words limit was selected for data analysis. The title of the essay was: "Universities in Australia need to learn not only from Western intellectual traditions but also from those of other cultures in order to meet the challenges of 21st century. Discuss". The essay can be seen from an SFL perspective as an analytical exposition[3] as the essay is to argue for only one side of an issue. Analytical exposition moves through four typical schematic stages: Identification or Background, Thesis, Series of Arguments, and Reinforcement or Recommendation (Coffin, 1996).

The essays were divided into high-graded (HGEs), and low-graded essays (LGEs) by the researcher who was independent of teaching the course. HGEs or successful essays refer to essays that received a distinction D and above (>75%), and LGEs or unsuccessful essays are defined as those that received passes P (50-64%) and fails F (<50%). MGEs range from 65% to 74%. As criteria on the essays were based on SFL, the overall basis of assessment was common using SFL prompts such as register, structure and language features. While each of these grading criteria was studied, this paper will only report on the Averral aspect observed in grading. These included: "Cohesion achieved within paragraphs" (e.g. through theme/rheme choices, cause/effect and comparative expression);"Text and section previews used to organise information"; "Language features (persuasion and evaluation) including concessions; and whether "Information of the same type is grouped together in paragraphs".

Coding

Coding involves the following several steps. The first step is to code the data as proposals and propositions. Any sentence that includes a command is marked and defined as a proposal. Propositions are naturally the sentences that exclude proposals. Propositions are marked by PT and proposals by PS. The second step involves coding the proposals and propositions into two major choices namely Heterogloss (HG) and Monogloss (MG) (see Table 1). In this study, any clause that excludes Monogloss is coded as Heterogloss (see details Lee, 2010a and 2017). The third step is to further sort the data into Open and Close options. From the topological perspective explained earlier, Attribution operates along a continuum from contracting or close (e.g. authorially-endorsed attribution) to expanding or open (e.g. neutral/acknowledge and dis-endorsement/distance). The fourth step is to 'identify' Averral resources in contrast to Attribution resources. However, in this study, Averral resources of 'Claim', and Modalisation are coded as a Heteroglossic close (HC). Finally, Proclamation and Disclamation resources are identified and coded according to the revised categories.

So far, examples of Averral (Open and Close options) were provided as separate cases. However, in the actual coding, the combinations of Averral and Attribution, and of Open and Close options within Averral, can occur simultaneously in the one clause or within the clause complex where a number of clauses are linked together grammatically (for details see Halliday, 1994; Halliday & Mattihessen, 2014; Eggins, 2000; Christie & Derewianka, 2008). An example of this is:

(8) III **Third reason** [reason: HC] **for why Australian Universities need to learn not only from the Western intellectual tradition but also other intellectual traditions is** II [pronouncement: HC] **to** [purpose: HC] achieve '**globalised view**' [scare quote: HC] II that does **not** [denial: HC] **merely** [adversative: HC] depend on a value sense of a culture (EAS 1-30).

Example (8) demonstrates that within Pronouncement, Reason is embedded. Within the Scare quote (Close option), Denial and Concession (Close option) are again embedded. In this case, coding can be simply done in sequence. Therefore, Example (8) is coded below.

Table 1:
A sample coding of Claim resources

Clause	Colour coding and content	Proposition/ Proposal	Option	Categories of Engagement
30	Third reason [reason] for why Australian Universities need to learn not only from the Western intellectual tradition but also other intellectual traditions [pronouncement] is to [purpose] achieve 'globalised view' [scare quote] that does not [denial] merely [adversative] depend on a value sense of a culture.	Proposal (PS)	HC/ HC /HC /HC /HC/HC	Reason / Pronouncement/ Purpose/ /Scare quote /Denial/Adversative

Results & Analysis

Quantitative Overview

As seen in Table 2, among the four sub-types of Claim resources, Expectancy is most commonly used (192), constituting more than half of the instances of Claim. This is not surprising, as arguing genres draw on causal relationships and logical conjunctions. Differences can be found between the top four HGEs and low LGEs (see Table 2). In general, HGEs utilised Claim resources much more frequently than LGEs (241 vs. 176). Specifically, great differences can be found in terms of Denial (HGEs 38 vs. LGEs 60) and Pronouncement (HGEs 30 vs. 9), and Expectancy (HGEs 130 vs. 62) but not Countering (HGEs 43 vs. 45). LGEs use a high frequency of Denial in constructing authorial voice, while HGEs rely on Pronouncement and Expectancy resources. HGEs tend to draw on Proclaim and Disclaim resources evenly, while LGEs are less likely to achieve this balance.

Table 2:

Differences between HGEs and LGEs in Claim

	Disclaim		Proclaim		Total
	Denial	Countering	Expectancy	Pronouncement	
Top HGEs	38	43	130	30	241
Low HGEs	60	45	62	9	176
Total	98	88	192	39	417

Analysis

Due to the limited space, three HGEs (EAS 1; HD, ALS 7; D and 8; D) and three LGEs (EAS 5; P and EAS 6; P and ALS 11; F) were chosen for analyses.

Denial

High-Graded Essays

EAS 1 does not favour Denial resources to a great extent. However, Once Denial options are used, they occur in the Evaluation, Evidence and Suggestion stage of the Argument (Lee, 2014b). Denial thus tends to occur within propositions.

        (9) III This can contribute to a development of an idea II that is merely focused on individual financial benefits but **not** social benefits (EAS 1-15). … implicit negative JUDGEMENT.

In example 9, the development of technology is negatively judged. Close options of Denial (not) alongside Countering (but, merely) are used by combining with the heteroglossic Open system of Probability (can) and presuppositional idea (idea). In this way, 'Can' creates the particular rhetorical effect of mitigating the writer's authority. The text displays that the writer's own strong claim is balanced well by reader-oriented resources. This makes the text persuasive.

A similar pattern in the use of Denial can be found in ALS 7. ALS 7 is not constructed much by Denial as well but once it is used, it creates judgment. It tends to occur by the interplay with heteroglossic option of attribution. In addition, incongruent forms of Denial (e.g. failure) are used.

(10) But the Western positivist world-view "quite plainly has **little** [denial] toleration for the traditional Aboriginal perspective of land, ecology, and land ownership" (Christie, 1985, p.41) (ALS 7-40).

(11) III The **failure** [denial] of Australian society II to appreciate the Indigenous intellectual tradition has realised awful consequences (ALS 7-41).

As seen in example 10, Denial is constructed within heteroglossic Open clauses of Attribution. Example 11's strong claim of Denial in clause 41 is possible because of Attribution used in clause 40. This complex mix between Averral and Attribution makes the text persuasive. The Denial occurs relating to the specific social realities such as Indigenous traditions, which thus carry a judgemental load. Most Denial occurs in the Argument stage in relation to propositions.

For HGEs, not only congruent forms (e.g. no, little, none, etc) but also incongruent forms of grammar are used to express Denial (e.g. at the expense of, prevent, reject, dismiss, avoid, fail, failure, removal, unacceptance, without, hardly, far from, against).

Low-Graded Essays

EAS 5 consists of a high proportion of Denial (12 times). Denial tends to be used without connotation of JUDGEMENT. Denial is also constructed with less incorporation of other Open systems. For LGEs, congruent forms of Denial are mostly used.

Double Denial is commonly used both in EAS 5 and 6 (11 times) with a high necessity of command. Even though example 12 shows that Denial is constructed in conjunction with other Open resources of Modalisation 'can', Concession 'however' and non-endorsing Report 'say', the clause sounds strong and less mitigating due to the double negation. Denial also tends to occur in the beginning stage and final stage in relation to proposal.

(12) III However [counter expectancy] **nobody** [denial]can say the Western intellectual tradition or the Western thought is the best or complete one, and II it does **not**[denial] need to learn from the intellectual tradition of other culture … The Thesis stage of Proposal (EAS 5-9).

Essay 11 remarkably consists of the highest number of Denials (27 times). This unsuccessful writer makes a strong claim through Denial without incorporating other external voices. The text thereby becomes homogenous and less persuasive. Denial is used as an isolated case without being attached to JUDGEMENT. As with EAS LGEs,

Denials frequently tend to occur in the beginning and final stages of the text. This creates less persuasion to readers.

In the following example13, Writer 11 organises his authority in telling the reader to do something (proposal) through double Denial. The double Denial occurs in the final Recommendation stage.

(13) III If universities **fail** [denial]to at least consider other academic cultures II when looking II to overcome challenges, II which face them in the modern academic culture, then II they are **locking out** [denial]a wealth of historically successful possibilities (ALS 11-39) … Proposal.

Countering

While there are no consistent differences between HGEs and LGEs in terms of Countering, some differences can be found when closely examining the sub-categories of Countering. HGEs tend to prefer Concession (HGEs 17 vs. 12), while LGEs writers prefer Adversative (LGEs 17 vs. 13) and Counter-expectancy (LGEs 16 vs. 13)

High-Graded Essays

Successful writers use Countering resources as a persuasive strategy to weaken any interpretation or view that will ultimately conflict with the final proposal presented. They use this as a mitigating device when they postulate a proposal in the Thesis stage (see example14) and after a claim made in the Argument stage (example 15). This pattern is repeated with regard to the first, second and third main Arguments in order to tell the reader to learn from other traditions.

(14) III In solving environmental problems, **although** [concession] developments of technology and resource management would be important issues, II the consideration of some assumptions and structures is also required (EAS 1-17).

In example 14 from EAS 1, the importance of the development of technology is first put forward. After being challenged through counter-evidence, this position is then re-evaluated. The Concession 'although' rules out the expectation that developments in technology and resources are important. This is because social assumption and structures shape the form of technology that society utilizes.

The successful ALS pattern of using Countering is similar to that of the successful EAS (see example 15). In the opening stage, Concession resources are used to weaken the proposition and to include alternative interpretations in hypotactic clauses. Countering is also used to acknowledge an opposite or alternative view of adopting the Western tradition, but then to frustrate the expectation.

(15) III For this reason, **despite** [concession] arguments **to the contrary** [counter-expectancy], II universities which adopt the Western academic tradition II

need to integrate this aspect of the indigenous intellectual tradition into its pedagogy II in order to better meet this important environmental challenge (ALS 8-25).

Low-Graded Essays

In contrast, poor writers tend not to use Concession or Counter-expectancy resources in the beginning stage. This fails to offer room for negotiation with readers in delivering main proposals. In addition, they use Countering resources without JUDGEMENT, attaching demand or interrogating all other interpretations. EAS 5 exploits this resource very frequently. However, most Countering consists of Counter-expectancy 'however' and Adversative 'still', 'just'.

(16) In 21st century, Japanese intellectual tradition **still** [adversative] has a tendency to **just** [adversative] give text knowledge, assignments and exams to students (EAS 5-26).

ALS unsuccessful writers use a considerable number of Countering resources in a sophisticated form. However, as seen in example 17, Countering is used to a lesser extent to weaken the proposition in the opening stage, than seen in the successful writers. The main use of Countering is not constructed in relation to JUDGEMENT and the proposal.

(17) II What makes the aboriginal academic culture more amazing is II the fact that **despite** [concession] their lack of written methods of any kind, II their dreaming stories and the like has remained constant throughout time (ALS 11-11).

Expectancy

Among the five 'Expectancy' resources, the most significant gap between the top four HGEs and LGEs occurs in Purpose (HGEs 44 vs. 13), Reason (HGEs 48 vs. 24), and Result (HGEs 17 vs. 9) respectively (see Table 3). As seen Table 3, not much difference can be found in terms of Condition (HGEs 19 vs. 15) and Insurance (HGEs 2 vs. LGEs 1).

Table 3:
Differences between HGEs and LGEs in Expectancy resources

Grade	Expectancy					Total
Types	Condition	Reason	Result	Purpose	Insurance	
Top HGEs	19	48	17	44	2	130
Low LGEs	15	24	9	13	1	62
Total	34	72	26	57	3	192

High-Graded Essays

For successful writers, Expectancy is used for two rhetorical purposes. Expectancy is used to claim the proposal prospectively either in the Identification or the Point stage

and justify the claim or reaffirm claims retrospectively in the Evidence and Suggestion stage. When Expectancy is used for the first purpose, several Expectancy resources are frequently combined to create authority (see example 8 above and 23 below in the Pronouncement section). When Expectancy resources are used for the second purpose, they are frequently combined with other Open options, such as Presupposition and other Attributions to persuade of the writers' authority.

(18) III **Due to** [reason] this belief [presupposition], II this highly respecting and maintaining land is their one **reason** [reason] to exist (EAS 1-28).

EAS 1 uses the highest number of Reason and Purpose resources. A variety of types of grammatical resources of Reason is exploited. Reason is expressed mostly by nominalisation of 'reason' and prepositions such as 'Due to'. Example 18 shows that Writer 1's retrospective claim is persuasive due to the combination of Reason 'due to' 'reason' and Presupposition 'this belief'. Again the writers' claim is constructed with a formal tone using nominalisation (e.g. reason).

In ALS 7's argument, many Expectancy resources are also combined to achieve the first rhetorical purpose of the writer's claim. In example 19, Condition (if), the passive form of Purpose (are to be found) and Result (then) are used prospectively to imply obligation. The obligation is that universities in Australia must take action to learn from the aboriginal culture due to the intention of finding solutions to the environment.

(19) III **If** [condition] solutions to the dilemmas of salination, land degradation and soil erosion are **to** [purpose] be found **then** [result], II Australians need to look at how the Aboriginal people successfully II managed the land for many centuries prior to the arrival of Europeans (ALS 7-31).

Example (20) below illustrates that 'Reason' and 'Result' relating to causatives around propositions are combined to justify the claim of the argument and thus the argument is strong.

(20) III The salination problem is **a result of** [result] the raising of the watertable, II a phenomenon **caused** [reason] directly by extensive land clearing, farming, and over irrigation of crops (ALS 7-25).

Low-Graded Essays
HGEs combine other 'Expectancy' resources such as Reason, Purpose, Pronouncement. This combination enables writers to have the authority to tell readers as well as supporting their arguments. In contrast, LGEs' justifications are not made in those contexts. While poor writers use some instances of Reason, Reason is not constructed to raise Claim and justify Evidence. The following example from EAS 6 with Pass constructs a 'force' type of obligation.

(21) III **If** [condition] we do not pay a close attention to culture, II misinterpretation can occur and may **cause [reason]** violence or even war (EAS 6-36).

ALS LGEs also use a relatively higher frequency of Expectancy resources, but the way they use them is significantly different from those of HGEs. Firstly, negative Condition forms dominate with less use of other Expectancy resources such as Reason, Result and Purpose. There is thus less interaction among Claim resources. Secondly, this consequence type of Condition, along with Denial, is dialogically contracting.

(22) III **If** [condition] Australian universities fail to [denial] learn from the strengths and weaknesses of academic cultures other than their own, II **then** [result] they will not [denial] be operating to their full potential (ALS 11-8).

Further, most Results and Reasons can be found in the Proposition rather than in the Proposal. The conjunction and verb type of Results are more commonly used than Reason.

Pronouncement
High-Graded Essays
As already noted in the Expectancy analysis, successful writers also effectively use Pronouncement in putting forward the authority of the argument. As shown in examples 6 and 8 above, the thematised Pronouncement as a 'subject' entails a writer's communicative persuasion in order to bring justification for the proposal prospectively. This paragraph level of the Theme is traditionally referred to as the topic sentence. EAS 1 uses Pronouncement resources most frequently in order to construe the writer as authoritative in relation to the views put forward. In example 23, a similar pattern of Pronouncement used by ALS HGEs can be seen. The extract invests successful writers with a degree of authority regarding the subsequent set of propositions. Further this position of authority is reinforced through the thematisation of Pronouncement at the paragraph level termed Proclamation.

(23) III**A primary reason** [reason] **for which universities in Australia must learn from other intellectual traditions** [pronouncement] **is** II the need for Australia II **to** [purpose] move into the twenty first century as an economically viable nation (ALS 8-9).

The following example 24 can be regarded as Pronouncement as well. The extract can be rephrased to the following clause: 'I declare that two aspects (understandings, and incorporation) should be included for Australia to better face challenges'. This Pronouncement shows the same metadiscoursal function as described previously in the opening stage. However, Pronouncement at the Identification stage is constructed more in a global context. This whole text level of the Pronouncement is considered as an 'Announcement'.

(24) III **This includes** [pronouncement] a better understanding of these cultures and II their incorporation into the university system II in order that Australia better face economic, environmental and educational challenges (ALS 8-3).

Low-Graded Essays

LGEs employ the least number of Pronouncement. If there is any, the location is not in an appropriate stage and it is not constructed to increase the strength of their position.

(25) III **Another common factor within intellectual tradition** [pronouncement] **is** II that we all feel a need to understand ourselves in every way conceivable (EAS 6-35).

The following extract from ALS also shows that Pronouncement is not constructed to entail command. Further, it is not combined with Reason or Purpose. Rather, APPRECIATION of Reaction (amazing) failed to give the writer authority.

(26) III **What makes the aboriginal academic culture more amazing** [pronouncement] **is** II the fact that despite their lack of written methods of any kind, II their dreaming stories and the like have remained constant throughout time(ALS 11-11).

Interpretative Summary

In summary, significant differences between HGEs and LGEs can be identified in terms of the deployment of Claim resources. Overall, HGEs utilised Claim resources more frequently than LGEs. This result in an ESL context is consistent with Swain (2010) and with Kim (2011) in an EFL context. However, this result contradicts Wu (2005, 2008) to some degree.

Qualitatively, with regards to Denial resources, poorer writers construct arguability through a high frequency of Denial and double negations. In contrast, successful writers mitigate strong Denial using other Open options, such as Attribution, Modalisation, and Concession. LGEs fail to show this interplay by constructing Denial as an isolated case.

The main issue in terms of Countering is not the frequency of this resource. It is a matter of where it is in relation to the Thesis and the Argument stage and 'how' it is used in relation to JUDGEMENT and the Proposal. This result is consistent with Wu (2005, 2008). This implies that in arguing genres, Countering resources are used to capture both acknowledging an audience's possibly different interpretations and mitigating the writer's claim. In successful writing, Countering has these particular rhetorical effects in argument. That is, the textual voice acknowledges and represents as reasonable the view that the appeal (learning from Western intellectual tradition) might have been a good idea but then stands against this. Thus both alignment and misalignment are combined. It constructs some degree of alignment with a readership which may have similarly held such a positive expectation of the appeal.

The claim resource of Expectancy is closely related to arguability and authority. Quantitatively, LGEs' lack of explicit forms of justification attached to proposals (reason, cause, because, etc.) further weakens their arguability. The

interaction among Expectancy resources such as Reason, Result, Condition and Purpose is not well exploited in LGEs. This weakens the writers' averring and argumentativeness. In addition, LGEs' construction of logical conjunction is not utilised to mount two rhetorical purposes of Expectancy resources: Claim prospectively and justify or reaffirm the Claim retrospectively in the Argument stage (Lee, 2010b, 2014). HGEs' Expectancy of Reason and Result are nominalised. This result clearly demonstrates that HGEs are constructed with more arguability in a formal tone.

With regard to Pronouncement, successful writers use Pronouncement prospectively in the Thesis and in the opening Claim in the Argument stage. They also use it retrospectively in the conclusion section. The resources are mostly combined with other Expectancy resources such as Reason and Purpose to create authority. This result is consistent with Coffin and Hewings' (2004) findings in the analysis of argumentative essays written by the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) candidates. HGEs use Pronouncement in order to construct their subjective view as the contextual frame for the arguments and put forward evidence to prove the overall thesis of the essay. This way of texturing of authorial stance serves to inject a strong subjective orientation prospectively into the unfolding arguments.

A similar way of constructing Pronouncement resources by HGEs implies that successful writers construct metadiscoursal language to inform the reader about what information will follow subsequently, both at the clause and text level. However, the present tense of relational verbs (is, includes) foregrounds the Close option (Lee, 2017). This pronouncing option alongside Expectancy resources enables writers to achieve the twin purposes of authority through the Close option of the Claim and persuasion through guiding information. Pronouncement is an important resource of metadiscourse which makes text considerate.

The results also indicate that successful writers are also skilful in where to utilise claim resources and attribution in connection with schematic structure. That is, the results highlight the importance of teaching claim systems in relation to the Coffin's (1996) schematic structure of the academic argument (Lee, 2014). As seen in Table 4, HGEs construct arguability, authority and persuasion through particular choices of ENGAGEMENT resources in the particular schematic stages. This dialogic interaction through alignment and disalignment makes HGEs' essays highly dialogic through contextualisation prospectively and recontextualisation retrospectively. That is, HGEs achieve the right balance or dialogic interplay between 'authority' in the topic sentences and 'humility' of value orientation through multiple ENGAGEMENT in the supporting sentences (Lee, 2010b, 2017).

Table 4:

HGEs' pattern of the dialogic interaction/interplay from Claim of Averral and Attribution within schematic structure (Adopted from Lee, 2014, 2010a, 2017).

Structure of PE from a traditional perspective	Schematic structure of PE (Functional terms)	Heteroglossic diversity	Speech function	Claim resources used
	Identification stage	Monogloss	Proposition	Presupposition (prospectively)
	Thesis	Heteroglossic Open	Proposal	Claim and Modalisation (prospectively)
Topic Sentences	Argument 1: General Claim	Heteroglossic Close	Proposal	Claim prospectively Pronouncement, Expectancy
Supporting Sentences (Explain & Illustrate theory)	Justification (Evaluation and Evidence)	Monogloss Heteroglossic Open Monogloss	Proposition Proposition Proposition	Presupposition Attribution, Modalisation, Concession, Condition, Expectancy, Negation, Presupposition (retrospectively)
Concluding Sentences	Suggestion	Heteroglossic Open	Proposal	Claim and Modalisation retrospectively

Discussions, Implications and Conclusions

The paper has attempted to analyse ESL writers' ability to produce coherent and critical voices from an interpersonal perspective using White's (1998, 2004) ENGAGEMENT system focusing on the Averral side of Claim resources. This paper has adjusted White's model by delineating Claim resources in more details.

The results also provide EAP professionals with some insight in terms of effective pedagogy in teaching cohesion in academic writing. In successful writing, the relationship with disalignment is construed via values of mostly Countering while grounds of solidarity in the face of this disalignment, are provided via instances of Expectancy and Pronouncement.

It is noteworthy that teaching logical connections within a semantic focused approach of ENGAGEMENT can help to demystify 'being coherent and critical' from

a linguistic perspective. This approach enables teachers to teach both the language system and structure simultaneously. Teaching coherence can be done in relation to the structure in three ranks. The global level of being coherent can be taught in terms of how students stick to the task questions. HGEs display a pattern of claiming prospectively using metadiscoursal language of Announcement in Thesis in the introduction and in Point stage in the body and justifying the claim retrospectively in the conclusion. At the paragraph level of being coherent, successful writers use Monogloss and heteroglossic Close options of the Claim resources of cause and effect, Purpose, and Pronouncement to demonstrate their authority at the level of the topic sentence. Subsequently, successful writers justify their claims by relying on Attribution combined with Evaluation. Many persuasive devices of Countering, Denial, some Expectancy resources are utilised to provide negotiative room in drawing on theory through acknowledging readers' different perspectives on the issues under investigation.

The results also indicate the importance of incorporating 'dialogic literacy' (Cooper, 1998, p.81) into academic literacy and integrity in particular, into second language pedagogy and research in writing (Farmer, 1998; Marchenkova, 2005; Hall et al., 2005). Dialogic pedagogy is concerned with how to reconcile tensions between writers' subjectivity/creativity and objective data/the dominant convention in which they write (Lee, 2008a, p.38), as these conflicts are the sources of confusion, frustration and difficulties encountered by students (Recchio, 1998; Ritchie, 1998). The dialogic literacy helps EAP practitioners to understand the importance of merging writers' individual voices with public voices. Most importantly, it helps to achieve a balance between the two, that is, writers' argumentation and persuasion to the audience, between exerting authority and humility at the same time, and between explain theory and its application to the case. It is thus vitally important to teach ESL students several dialogic strategies, as they encounter a great challenge in their argument in terms of the dialogic engagement with the two poles (Braxley, 2005; Lee, 2010a).

The paper concludes that the extent to which and the ways in which LGEs and HGEs deploy Claim resources are quite different. HGEs exploit interaction among Claim resources and other Open resources to create the arguability of the writers with persuasion, while LGEs' Claim resources do not interact with each other. HGEs' similar patterns of Claim demonstrate that their authorial viewpoints are frequently made salient through their strategic location in the overall structure of the argument. This interplay is less likely to be seen among poor writers. While this study has extended the Claim system, other Claim resources should be incorporated into the appraisal system to establish a more comprehensive and holistic framework for further emphasizing cohesion. Some findings cannot be generalised due to the small amount of data used coupled with some contradictions in findings. Therefore, further research should be conducted using large corpus data in different genres in order to

establish a clearer baseline for analysis of an important system within the SFL framework.

Endnotes

1. The terms argumentative, persuasive and expository essays have been interchangeably used among scholars involved in academic literacy. However, in this paper, a persuasive essay is preferred to the two, as the term considers audience's expectations over a writer's own expressions (Lee, 2006).

2. According to Halliday (1994), Modality consists of Modalisation which refers to 'Probability' (e.g. maybe, I think, may, etc) and Modulation which refers to 'obligation' (e.g. must, should). Strictly speaking, the term 'entertain' is thus broader than Halliday's (1994) term of the modality, as it includes White's (1999) terms of 'Appearance' (e.g. seem) and 'Hearsay' (e.g. it is said that …).

3. The term Contrastive Rhetoric has been renamed as Intercultural Rhetoric (see Connor et al., 2008; Lee, 2014).

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